



Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

Teacher Support Staff Superintendent Advisory

4:00-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Administration Building – 215 S. 6th Street West
Room 14

Members: Adriel Shearer, Alex Apostle, Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Connie Pederson, Dave Burtch, Diane Anderson, Elizabeth McGrath, Hatton Littman, Janice Nugent, Karen Allen, Mary McAllister, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Sarah Lee, Tricia Owens

AGENDA

1. Welcome – Alex Apostle
2. Another issue just sent to me was that Resource and Title staff need to be given the curriculum manuals just like grade level teachers. Getting new Math programs, but not providing all staff with manuals continues to be a concern. (Tricia Owens, Michelle Long-Lowell) – Trevor Laboski
3. Governor Bullock's Early Edge preschool for four year olds. How is MCPS planning for this and was this considered in the facilities plan? (Janice Nugent, Jefferson) – Karen Allen
4. Space to teach Special Ed. Classes. We are running 3 classes in a room with the dimensions of 20x20 and these classes have a couple of different levels of students in each. Space to teach in the title room with 2 classes at a time is a third of the size with the same issues of different levels of students in each. This is quite an art of teaching the teachers have to pull off since the kids are high distractible, highly volatile, and emotional. (Tricia Owens-Lowell) – Karen Allen
5. A Variety of Sensory tools needed for special ed kids to be available in each school and a replacement fund in place since these tools can be broken, lost, stolen or worn out. IEP – sensory tools, supplemental aids and services and modifications to be supplied for student within a timely fashion. Para training to be required and made available for the types of students they are working with in the classroom or school. (Tricia Owens -Lowell) – Karen Allen
6. Elementary School Secretaries' end of year/beginning of year work load (Sarah Lee, Rattlesnake) – Mark Thane
7. Review start of school year celebration fall 2014, suggestions for fall 2015 – Alex Apostle
8. Status of Employee Recognition via MBI (Diane Anderson)
9. Active Resistance Training Update/Advanced Training (Diane Anderson)

Wiki link for Teacher, Support Staff, Superintendent, Advisory Committee Information

[http://www.mcpsonline.org/index.php/Teacher, Support Staff, Superintendent, Advisory Committee](http://www.mcpsonline.org/index.php/Teacher,_Support_Staff,_Superintendent,_Advisory_Committee)

BULLETIN NOTES – May 20, 2014

Karen Allen opened the meeting at 4:01 p.m. Dr. Apostle will be a little late.

1. Active Resistance Training – would like training scheduled during work day

- Karen explained we are trying to have a variety of the training
 - We had one day specifically for classified staff, the PIR day
 - On Friday, June 13, we will have another one – that is also a work day, but not for support staff
 - We need an empty school to have active resistance training
 - Comment: the Administration Building or Mount Jumbo might work
 - Some people hate the idea of coming on Saturday, some don't
 - If we made it all work days, some people would hate that
 - Question about weekdays during the summer: Karen will check; we don't have the bank account to do what we would like
 - 30-50 people are trained at each training; 160 total at this point
 - There is a training video which is helpful to familiarize viewers with alternatives they can do, little steps they can take
 - In the summer, there are classified staff in the buildings: 72 custodians could probably be trained in the summer without paying overtime; also paras who work in the summer as custodians
- Cost is a huge piece of it
 - Carol Ewen has written a grant to the federal government trying to get money to support the active resistance training
- Up to now, trainers have been members of the sheriff's department, police department, and university police
 - We do have some people who have been trained as trainers
 - Our people may not be comfortable yet to offer the training
 - Discussion: it is hard for others to do the training that the police/sheriffs/university police are able to offer; things you take for granted as a civilian
- Our goal is to get all staff trained who want to be trained; we will get there
 - There may be exceptions: people who have gone through intense trauma in their life or who physically can't do it
 - Discussion that it may not ever be something that is forced on everyone
 - First year teachers have so much going on, it is hard to do the training; but if we only have it for a couple of years, they may not get a chance
 - For those who have been in domestic situations that have been very impactful, some instructors have talked about another, gentler tack to help them develop skills
 - Discussion of the value of everyone having the same training background and knowing that all will act together in response to a threat; the value of thinking and working as a team
 - Practice, practice, practice – the need for the response to be automatic
 - Fleeing yourself is different from having to get 25 fourth graders out and coming up with scenarios to make it possible
 - Discussion that if something happened and your kid's teacher was not trained, a parent would be upset
 - Consensus that everyone who has had the training has said it was valuable; concerns tend to come from those who have not done the training
 - There is a need for refresher courses
 - Not just teachers, but all staff are being trained: so if the teacher is not trained, the paras, secretaries, or custodians may be
- The fact we have started the training is important and gives positive direction
- We will work with Melanie and Sheri on ways we can continue training for everyone
- Suggestion to have a list of who is trained in each building so we can see where the holes are
- What other things are we doing in terms of preventing a crisis from occurring – recommendations from the committee, and where we are on those

- Number 1 priority from Safety and Security Committee was to hire a person to be responsible for overseeing training and safety and security in our buildings 24/7
 - ❖ We have not done that for cost reasons
 - ❖ We may be getting some help from the police department; Alex and Pat are meeting with the chief in the next 2 weeks
 - ❖ The chief understands the need to have someone on site full time dealing with safety and security
 - ❖ Creative funding is possible
- Training was another priority; we are moving on that; we will continue
- The barrier in front of Hellgate HS where cars make the turn: Burley is working with the city and county; we should be making progress
- Making sure crosswalks are marked and well lit
 - ❖ Alex has met with the mayor about Hawthorne and Sentinel crosswalks: we will have flashing lights
- Change to phone system: now 911 can tell which building has called in
- FEMA video: encourage all to watch it; it shows the active resistance process
- We are developing an incident command center at the Business Building where Alex, ERDs, Burley, Hatton, Melanie and Sheri will coordinate with police and Beach
- We are planning a federal level training for the future
- We will have Carol Ewen come in the fall to talk about outcomes for the Mental Wellness Task Force
- Carol has applied for a Justice Department grant that would have a community component about gun safety all the way up to strategies for classroom activity
- UM has a risk assessment team; we are developing one
- The CSCT process has been organized; we have new contracts with Full Circle and Western Montana Mental Health using evidence based practice
- We are moving away from the contractor model to a model integrated in the schools
- We will keep it on the front burner; we want to do everything possible to be prepared for any type of crisis
- Question about follow-up from the incident at Lowell last year, where the police could not remove an individual with a holstered gun from the park: Alex thinks we have resolved it; he will check with Burley.

2. Assistive Technology: Kathleen Nerison

- This item was brought up by Janice Nugent, who was not here; but Kathleen Nerison had spoken with her about what she had in mind, and gave an update on some of the things we have done
- Three years ago we had some ARRA money that came to special education; we earmarked a certain amount for technology for our staff to use in helping students access the curriculum
 - We asked for proposals from staff; 20 responses were received, ranging from video cameras, iPads and iPods, to a number of different technologies
 - A committee rated the proposals and we decided to purchase all of them
 - We asked people to disseminate to others what they learned about using technology to help students
- Two years ago we purchased iPads for all speech and language therapists and for occupational and physical therapists; also iPads for center based students, those with emotional disturbances and those in life skills or extended resource programs, and for those with disabilities that pose a challenge in terms of accessing the curriculum
- We have done training every year for 3-4 years for teachers and paras on PIR days to begin to learn how to use iPads
- We have bought applications that are about \$200; they have proven to be very effective for kids with autism especially and for many nonverbal kids as an augmentative communication tool
- Where we would like to go next
 - We have worked with Montana Tech with the ATSTAR process to determine what kind of assistive technologies students need and what are best suited to meet their needs
 - We trained occupational and physical therapists in using the ATSTAR process; we want to expand that to include special education teachers and speech therapists

- The technology parents want may not be the most helpful for their students; ATSTAR helps you to assess what would be most helpful
- Windows has some voice-to-text software
- There are things becoming more accessible to all educators; we want to make sure our special educators have access to them
- There are more advanced assistive technology programs that we would like to purchase for specific classrooms
- Next step is determining what we want all our teachers to have and what extra we want specific teachers to have
- Hatton asked about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and about professional development related to it: Kathleen replied that the most important aspect is that we want to use UDL to teach to the edges; it is not just a special ed responsibility
- Reminder from minutes of January 21 that Janice had brought forth needs for more computers and whiteboards in the special ed classrooms

3. **Students missing class for non-instructional events** (Adriel Shearer)

- A lot happens in the spring that pulls students from classrooms – losing six half days over 3 weeks has a big impact
- Request for a more thoughtful approach to the scheduling of these events, not all closely together
- Events include the drunk driving/car accident event, the ACT, Smarter Balanced testing, and AP exams
 - The drunk driving piece is community developed; it is centered on the senior graduation party and accidents that happen in relation to it
 - We have brought younger kids into it because presenting it to seniors only is too late
 - It is out of our hands for the timing
 - The ACT is grant-funded; the grant is up in a couple of years, and it could end—but it is a great benefit to students
 - The only one of these events for which we can control the timing is Smarter Balanced testing: there was a large window this year, but it will be narrower next year
 - We are hoping to close up the window of the start and end dates of testing at all schools
 - Principals were asked to talk to people in buildings and create a good schedule for Smarter Balanced testing, then gather the community afterwards to discuss what went well and what did not
 - If you are in a building where no one is communicating with you about Smarter Balanced testing, Trevor suggests you talk to the principal
 - With Smarter Balanced, we have moved testing that happened in 10th grade into the 11th grade when there is also ACT and AP testing
- There is more pressure when all these things combine
- Suggestion: we could build a couple of extra days into Quarter 4
- Comment: even at elementaries, scheduling is an issue: e.g. fire drills and lock down drills only the first two weeks and last two weeks of the year
- Suggestion to make reminders at principal meetings to check how many drills have been done and are yet to be done, and spread them out
- Schoolwires/Calendar: we all have Schoolwires but calendars are different in every building; it could be more effectively used by the community if there were consistency
 - It would be helpful to see that two buildings are doing things at the same time and combine them
 - Parents will be able to log in to their portal and see calendars for all their kids and subscribe to them
 - Some teachers are using their calendars on Q
- What are we going to do differently to address this?
 - Remind principals to sit with committees of staff, teachers and parents on testing
 - Send schedules out to other buildings to help itinerant staff and students
 - ERDs will meet with principals, who will meet with staff, coordinate, get information out early, and do fire drills earlier than late May

4. **Start of School Year Celebration Fall 2014**

- We could just meet in buildings and that would be it; Alex does not believe that is the way to start a school year
- Our barbecue is a nice thing; it has great attendance
- It is a time to celebrate our accomplishments and the efforts of staff, and together we move forward
- When will we do it? We talked about the 25th or 26th of August
- We have heard that because there are many new staff and new principals, time is needed in the buildings to discuss the direction and the vision of the building, elements of the building and the district, and PLCs
- Committee input on the issue of what we can do to blend things together:
 - In the first couple of days it is nice to have time in your building to get yourself organized and work with your peers
 - It is important to celebrate and come together as a district
 - Maybe a good time would be a couple of weeks after the school year starts when you have had time to get acclimatized
 - Concern about a larger event than the 2-hour barbecue, with the new administrators and staff coming on board, that time will be a challenge; having it later in September would be a compromise
 - Trevor understands the concerns about your own building and room, but it is the job of the leadership and the collective good to step back and have everyone connect as part of a larger organization with all these people doing the same hard work. He thinks the two weeks later time would be fine
 - Alex wants it to be a time we can share our successes: those outside of education are always criticizing our work, saying we are not doing enough
 - If we do not celebrate our hard work and the great things happening every day in the district, who is going to do it?
 - He would like to have people look forward to a celebration of the good things happening
 - Support staff had concerns about the timing before school starts, when the custodial staff are scrambling and might like to come but can't leave the work they have to do to prepare
 - Additional concerns about food service staff who are not scheduled on that day before school starts; though they are invited, they do not feel they are a part of it
 - Doing it later when there is less panic about what there is to be done that day would be good
- Suggestion from a committee member that we go back to our buildings and talk about the ability to celebrate as an entire building, come back and flesh out the ideas staff had
- Suggestion of using the PIR day in September, so everyone could be included in a morning event, then spend the afternoon in their buildings
- Discussion of whether we would still have the barbecue before school starts as well as a program later on the PIR day
- To allow members to gather information from their buildings and bring it back, the committee scheduled a half hour meeting at 4 pm next Tuesday

The meeting concluded at 5:06 p.m.

BULLETIN NOTES – 5-27-14

Superintendent Alex Apostle opened the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

1. Review

- When we left last week, we determined we would use the PIR day in September to have a moment to share with our colleagues the good things happening in our district
- Members were asked to go back to their schools, get a feel for opinions, and report back
- The day will be an opportunity for the school board to get a feeling for where the schools are at, where they have been, and where they are going
- Highlight achievements taking place, the good things happening, the challenges we face

2. Responses from members

- We had achieved consensus that there would not be PowerPoint or other media; presentations were to be 3-5 minutes for each school, and not departments
- Yet it was brought to members of the union in terms of PowerPoint presentations and including departments—the reaction was not positive; overwhelmingly negative
- Despite efforts to clarify that it was more informal and did not include departments, some people still do not think it is a good idea, or that there are other things we should be doing
- There is an opportunity cost: what is most valuable for the 3 hours in the PIR day—this or training on some new technology we are inadequate on?
- Food service workers would be unlikely to attend; they don't work that day, and some live out of town
- There was confusion about what was discussed at the last meeting; minutes will be posted to the Wiki so all can read them
- There is a challenge in how to get everyone's voice in a reasonable period of time
- Suggestion of inviting each school to send us pictures of what they are doing and to reply to the questions of where they have been/where they are now/where they are going
 - Hatton could put it all together into one presentation, celebratory but not overwhelming
 - It could be a living document, posted on the website, talking about the school district in the voices of each building
- Conceptually the celebration is great; having short presentations is great
- Questions as to whether it is the best format or whether this is the best date
- There is a benefit in the chance for everyone in the district to see what other schools are doing and what the district as a whole is doing: things to be proud of
- If you do not tell a board what you are doing and show them you are moving forward, their agenda will creep in and they will tell you what you will be doing
- Often feedback comes mostly from those who are not happy
- There is a need to think of the people out there working at all hours and trying things who would like everyone to see what they are doing and the effort they are putting in
- One member was surprised by the negative reactions expressed in their building
 - Their building is very proud of what they are doing
 - Yet staff were adamantly opposed to doing anything—both the beginning barbecue as well as doing something on the PIR day
 - Preference to do something in the building together as a staff
 - Time of year could be an issue; people are overwhelmed
- Suggestion: when the board members visit the classrooms, spending more time would give them more of an understanding of the good things happening than the 3-5 minute presentations we are talking about
- We still have a journey in our district to reunite—there is still a lot of hurt
- Comment: this event does not carry on the spirit of PIR because it is not instructionally related
- Some staff thought it was intended as a slap in the face for schools that are not doing special projects, so they would be shamed in front of schools that are
- Preference to stay in the building and have time there
- Preference for breakfast over lunch
- Concerns about competition between schools; highlighting one's strength that is the weakness of another
- Concern that money should be used for students instead of staff
- Favorable response for not having it in the first couple of days; a relief
- Suggestion that the same 3 questions for all would level the playing field, and people would be more receptive
- Importance of developing a sense of community as a district
 - These responses highlight how critical it is to do that, whether through the presentations or something else
 - The divisions and the viewing of this as a competition are disheartening
 - We need to bring staff together and know that we have a common purpose

- One member received only 12 responses out of the entire staff of a building; that was disheartening
 - Those who replied preferred doing it in the morning on the PIR day
 - They preferred breakfast, then going back to the buildings and working
 - The sense of community is not there, probably because we are so large and spread out
- Comment that there was a time when there was not a sense of community in the buildings
 - Teachers did not want to share with each other; it would be considered a competition
 - Maybe we are moving into territory we have not been in before; a good sign, we are in a place where we were not
- Suggestion that the format should be somewhere in between informal and formal presentation
 - It could be a useful document that could live on in other ways and everyone could feel proud
 - The sense of competition may be heightened if it is more informal
 - It would be good to create a mediated something, a PowerPoint or a video, something that is an equalizing force
 - It is important that we have some kind of unifying theme
 - It is important to see what each other is doing not in a competitive way, but in an inspiring way
 - It was never the intention to shame others; no one would present their content in a way that would be intended that way
 - Reflectively examine what you are doing in your building and what you would like to be doing in your building

3. Superintendent response

- Alex appreciates and values that you went out and did a very nice job
- He would like some time to reflect on what was said, and to have all of us reflect
- He thinks there may be some middle ground
- He would hope that people would be involved and be happy
- It would be a presentation of where the school has been, where it is, and where it was going—that was pretty clearly outlined
- This is an extremely busy time of year—timing is important when talking about these types of issues
- He would like to revisit this in the fall
- Maybe we can find out what the staff would like to do
- On the first day, have a breakfast or a barbecue and then come back and discuss how we can communicate the successes
- He likes the middle ground idea
- This is a time to be excited and to rejoice and to share our successes

4. Discussion of a breakfast or barbecue before school starts

- Breakfast would be good, then go back to the buildings by lunch or earlier
- Breakfast, see everyone, say a few words to welcome people
- Alex suggests an hour, then everyone reports to their building; then we sit down and figure out how to celebrate our accomplishments
- A lot of people said they would like healthy alternatives, and with breakfast it is easier to do that
- We need to be inclusive: consider the engagement of the classified staff and food service workers who don't normally work that day because we are not serving lunch
- Camaraderie: get people together
- Welcome everyone back, engage with friends we have not seen, engage in unity
- Later we will figure out if we can put something from each school on the website

5. Conclusion

- Alex hopes everyone will stay with this committee
- There was agreement from all to do the breakfast, and later to celebrate at another time
- We will come back together and figure out the best way to celebrate that people will be receptive to

The meeting ended at 4:33 p.m.